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What should be the human existence in our time?

— From the view point of fundamental human rights —

— 7th January 1997 —

Jose Ramos Horta

1996 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

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PREFACE

Michio Takahashi

This English pamphlet includes two following addresses.

"What should be the human existence in our time?"

— From the view point of fundamental human rights —

"The Significance of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize"

— Keynote Address —

The former is the address of Mr. Jose Ramos Horta, 1996 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, given at the educational foundation Sendai Japan on January 7, 1997.

The latter is short keynote address by Dr.Yoichi Higuchi, Professor of Sophia University, at Hotel Sendai Plaza, made on the same day.

Japan has succeeded in modernization in Asia. On the other hand the historical facts that it had invaded many Asian countries including Timor island have been concealed.

These two addresses give us valuable suggestions in considering what role Japan should play in Asia from now on.

3,000 Japanese copies of these addresses were printed and delivered to various parts of Japan without charge. We intend to issue 2,500 copies of this English version and to send them free to many parts of Japan and abroad.

The end of 20 century is, at the same time, the end of the second millennium. The opening of 21 century is the beginning of the third millennium.

The history of the past 500 years, the latter half of the second millennium, has been a tragic era when Western Europe, U.S.A., and Japan invaded and colonized Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

It is indispensable for us to respect the right of self-determination of East Timorese and restore and secure the fundamental human rights to the people of East Timor.

Because we should overcome the negative heritage of the second millennium and create the righteous human history.

I hope that this pamphlet will become some little use for this purpose.

(1st, June, 1997)

Michio Takahashi in Darwin Tetun School

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What should be the human existence in our time?

— From the view point of fundamental human rights —

by Jose Ramos Horta

It is my honor and privilege, the pleasure to accept your kind invitation to be here today.

When I received a phone call from our good friend Michio Takahashi-san inviting me to come to this meeting, I accepted without hesitation.

I accepted immediately because your foundation through Michio Takahashi-san has been very long time supporters, friends of the people of East Timor.

And also we have many many friends in Japan who, for many years when the rest of the world were silent about East Timor, who always raise the issue the problem of East Timor in this country.

I'm also particularly honor to be the first non-Japanese, the first foreigner to speak at this annual meeting of yours.

In October, only three months ago I received the first, the most, the biggest surprise of my life when I got the news that I had won the Nobel Peace Prize.

I thought very humble by joining the list of Novel Laureate like Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai blama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and so many others, people of greater moral, political vision than myself.

Myself like all my other colleagues who have been fighting for freedom, for peace, for dignity of the people of East Timor, we have been fighting not looking for recognition, awards, but we have done, we are trying to do our duty to our people.

The struggle of the people of East Timor for freedom, for peace, for dignity is not different from the struggle of the people of Burma, of the people of Tibet, of the people of South Africa or the Palestinean people.

In the recent years, we have heard the statements by the leaders from China, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, saying that human rights, democracy are in Western concept that the West is trying to impose on the people of Asia.

Human rights such as freedom from torture, freedom from persecution, freedom from

fear, freedom to express your own opinion, to express your disagreement with government policies, these are values that are universal, that belong to every country, every society in the world.

We can look at the examples of South Korea, Philippines, even Thailand, or India to realize that west democracy, human rights are also Asian values, are also Asian aspirations.

The leaders in Indonesia, Malaysia, China that say that human rights are Western imposition on Asia, they are denying the centuries of tradition of Confusianism, Hindu, Islamic, or Buddhistiction about human freedom, human dignity.

There is no Asian, Eastern philosophy or religion that say that human rights, individual freedom, dignity, justice are not values of Asia, that are values from the West.

The struggle for democracy in Burma is a struggle of the Burmese people, the Burmese people are the ones who want peace, want democracy, want justice, want rule of law. It is not an invention of the West.

In the past, only until five years, ten years ago, the world was dominated by two major military blocks, the Warsaw Pact and the NATO alliance.

Millions of people were oppressed, were dominated, were killed in the name of the East West rivalry.

Eastern Europa, the Baltic States, East Germany were under Soviet domination.

And millions of people in Vietnam, in Central America, in Southern Africa, died as result of US intervention.

The two major blocks, the Warsaw Pact, the NATO alliance caused millions of death suffering around the world in the past fifty years.

Fortunately a few years ago suddenly we heard the great news that the Berlin wall collapsed, Soviet Union disintegrated and the cold war ended.

A Soviet cosmonaut went into space in 1989. He stayed for several months in the space.

When he was blasted to the space, he had a nationality, and a valid passport given by the powerful Soviet Union.

But then he received the news from Moscow that Soviet Union no longer existed and that his passport was no longer valid.

No one in Moscow knew what to do with him.

The mighty Soviet Empire ceased to exist.

I told this story only to illustrate that no matter the might of military force, the might of empires to subjugate people, citizens, in the end justice, freedom always prevail.

Who imagine, in the 60's, 70's, 80's, that the mighty Soviet Empire, the mighty Warsaw Pact would allow East Germany to reunify with West Germany? Who thought possible that the Baltic States would be free? who thought possible that the great Armenian people would be liberated?

And a question can be asked "Can anyone believe, dream that a small country like East Timor of less than 1,000,000 people can continue to struggle and win its independence against the aggressor Indonesia which has 200,000,000 people?"

When in October '96, the Nobel Committee announced that Bishop Belo, the head of the capital Church in East Timor and myself would be the winners of the Nobel prize in '96, it was also a message to the rest of the world, a message to Indonesia that the brute force can not be accepted as the means to solve a conflict.

Japan was once an aggressor country which invaded and occupied almost entire East Asia region.

Millions of people in Asia suffered, died because World War II.

But many hundreds of thousands of Japanese also died and suffered throughout World War II.

Japan today is a country based on the rule of law, dynamic democratic country with a free media, free universities, academia, very dynamic youth, with a lot of ideas, dreams. This is the new Japan.

Japan, through its own history of the past 50 years, knows very well that brute force, armies, military force, repression, can not survive.

Japan like South Korea, like the Philippines are models of what we are talking about and that is the universality of human rights, rule of law, and democracy.

Japan has contributed enormously to the reconstruction, to the economic development, well-being of many countries in Asia, in Africa and Latin America.

Because of its own history, Japan has the right, the authority, the obligation to speak out for freedom, for democracy, for human rights.

I fully agree with the author of the book that says Japan should learn to say "NO!"

But Japan should learn to say "NO!" not only to the United States.

Japan should also know how to say "NO!" to the tyrannies, to the dictatorships in Asia.

Japan can not pretend to be courageous in the face of United States because of economic trade disputes but be obedient to the dictatorships in Asia.

Japan can not be concerned only about the trade disputes it has with the United States, the European Union and maybe with some other competitive countries in Asia. It has also to be courageous in defending the universal values shared by and tied Japanese society.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma, our people in East Timor, the workers, the students, intellectuals in Indonesia who are in prison, the Tibetans, the Chinese democracy movement, they all expect Japan to say "NO!" to their oppressors.

I also believe that the United Nations must be reformed, it must be restructured.

In particular the Security Council should be expanded to accomodate a superior members, a country like Japan.

There are now five permanent members of Security Council who have the right of veto; United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom.

It seems that so far the only criteria for being permanent member of Security Council is the possession of nuclear weapons.

It is totally absurd, unacceptable that a decadent country like United Kingdom, the biggest arm smuggler in the world, should be permanent member of the Security Council, and Japan and Germany should be excluded.

United Kingdom, United States, France, Russia, and China are responsible for most of the conflicts that have taken place in many parts of the world since World War II.

Since the end of World War II, at least 20,000,000 people have been killed in conventional wars in the developing countries.

The conflicts in Middle East, in the Horn of Africa, in Central America, in Southern Africa in the past, for all these decades have been filled by weapons transferred from these countries to the developing countries.

The West, China, and Russia must be told to stop the transfer of weapons to the

dictatorships in the third world countries.

In the past there was massive grassroot movement all over the world against nuclear weapons.

There were mass movements in Japan, in Germany, France, England, United States, Australia, against the cruise missiles and all the other nuclear weapons.

In Japan, you know what is the meaning of nuclear weapons not only because of Nagasaki, Hiroshima, but because of the stationing in Japan of nuclear weapons.

But the biggest problem facing the developing countries for the past 50 years has not been nuclear weapons but conventional weapons.

The largest arm producers are all sitting in the Security Council.

Fortunately Japan can not be accused on the same level as these arm merchants now sitting in the Security Council.

The Security Council should be reformed to accomodate countries like Japan, Germany, Brazil, Egypt, South Africa, India as permanent members.

But Japan can also play a much more active role in conflict mediation in situations like in East Timor, in Sri Lanka, and in so many other places, where there is on going arm conflict.

The conflict in Middle East has been mediated by a little country called Norway.

The longest civil war in Latin American history lasting 36 years in Guatemala came to an end recently through the mediation of Norway.

So we don't understand why the second largest economy of the world, Japan, should not play an equal role to Norway in helping, settling the conflicts in Asia, in East Timor, in Burma, and elsewhere.

Japan has contributed economically to the well-being of many many countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America.

But real development, real progress can come about when there is respect for the rule of law, for freedom, for democracy.

In the case, for instance, of Indonesia, there is a great economic development, enormous contribution by Japan and the Suharto regime, "Yes" can be credit with these economic success of the past 20 years.

But in the life of a country, one can not look only at the economic indicators, the

statistics, but we must also look at the human life.

In Indonesia workers have no right to organize independently. Workers earn like 1 dollar or 2 dollars a day working more than 10 hours. Workers are in prison. Mr.Muchtar Pakpahan, leader of the trade union movement in Indonesia, is in prison. Academics, writers are in prison. Students are arrested for no reason. So where is Japan's contribution to the human sight, the human dimension of the Indonesian Republic?

Japan's strategic interest, its economic interest, relationship with Indonesia can be protected, preserved in the long run, only if Japan uses its influence today to persuade the military in Jakarta, the Suharto regime to relinquish power and begin the process of democratic transition.

In the case of East Timor, what can be the role of Japan?

The prime minister of Japan is visiting Indonesia.

And we appeal to him to seize on these opportunity to raise two fundamental issues with the regime of General Suharto.

The first problem is that there has to be quick transition to democracy in Indonesia. Prisoners in Indonesia, workers, students must be released. There must be freedom of press in Indonesia. There must be freedom of the workers to organize independent trade unions. There must be free elections in '97.

Like it happened in Japan, in South Korea, in the Philippines, in India, the army in Indonesia must return to the barracks and transfer the power to an elected parliament, and elected government.

The second message the prime minister could convey to the Indonesian dictator is regarding East Timor.

Indonesia invaded and occupied East Timor in 1975.

The United Nations' General Assembly and Security Council have condemned that invasion and demanded Indonesia's withdrawal from East Timor.

East Timor was never part of Indonesia.

It was colonized by Portugal for almost 500 years.

Therefore Indonesia has no legal or historical claims over East Timor.

The past 21 years have shown already that no matter the force use against the people of East Timor they will never surrender.

No matter the violence the brutalities would be practiced against women, children, school teachers, civil servants, the church of East Timor, the people of East Timor will never be intimidated.

Therefore Japan could play an active constructive role by using its influence with Indonesia to persuade Indonesia to begin to withdraw its troop from East Timor and respect the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination.

These are the two issues that we believe Japan's prime minister in his visit to Indonesia could raise with his Indonesian host.

Sometimes I am asked the question where the East Timor. A small country of less than 1,000,000 can survive as an independent entity?

First for your information there are at least 40 countries in the United Nations today, sovereign, independent that have the same population and territory or even less than East Timor.

Just the case of Singapore is 40 times smaller than East Timor.

East Timor has large resources in oil, natural gas, marble, coffee, sandalwood, fishing and so on.

Yes, East Timor can economically survive.

Japan can contribute decisively towards an independent East Timor.

An independent East Timor would have close cooperation with Japan.

That is our hope.

As we enter the 21st century with the end of the cold war that is mantling of the military blocks, a question can be asked what should be the role of a country like Japan.

There is today a great opportunity in world history for Japan to play an active role in the promotion of peace, democracy, and human rights.

Human rights must start from school, must start from kindergartens. Children in the primary schools, in the kindergartens, in high schools must learn about universal values of human rights.

I believe that in the long run if educators like you, if educators in Australia, in Sri Lanka, in Indonesia, educators all of the world are to engage in an active program, in human rights education, in teaching the children, adults about our rights but also about our obligation towards others, then maybe the 21st century will be free from wars of

aggression, from ethnic violence, religious conflicts and so on.

Human rights are not an abstract concept.

For children and adults, women, men, in East Timor, or Indonesia, or Burma, human rights for them mearn freedom from fear, freedom for oppression, not being afraid of being arrested and disappeared.

Japanese children, teenagers, adults, they can go to school, go to work and return home safely. There is no police, no army that bothers them or arrest them, interrogate them, torture them and kill them.

Unfortunately this is not the fate of children, teenagers, men and women in East Timor, in many parts of Indonesia like West Papua, Aceh, Burma etcetra.

But these situations can change if the Japanese government intervene actively, forcefully, using its influence to change the behavior of the government like the SLORC in Burma, Indonesia.

But human rights are better protected through education, through the changing of mentalities, through the changing of generation.

We must look into the roots of the problems. For instance the current situation in the Japanese Embassy in Lima in Peru. Why that is happening? Why the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka between the Simharas majority and the Tamils minority? Why the continuing conflicts in Luanda, Burma, Burundi, Zaire? Why the continuing conflicts in Aceh, Sumatra, in West Papua? Why these conflicts?

In all these conflicts there are no easy answers. We cannot generalize. There are no simplistic answers. These problems are very complexed, involving many many aspects, ethnic, religious, cultural, economic exploitation and so on.

But through persistent, patient human rights education in kindergartens, in schools, all over the world, yes, we can teach people to be tolerant of the remains of the minorities, to be tolerant towards the indigenous peoples, to be generous towards the neighbors. We can teach goverment bureaucrats, law enforcement agencies, to be respectful of the right of individuals. We can teach adults in government, in parliament to understand the sensitivities the demands of workers, of students, they can be taught to engage in dialogue, to be patiemt, they can be taught not to use violence, all these means human rights education.

Some of the conflicts have to do with the right of people's self-determination. But what does self-determination mean?

Self-determination under international law means free choice, means the right of a people wherever they are to determine their wishes, their future.

In some situations self-determination does not mean that the people who are claiming self-determination they want separate from the country, they want cessation. It means they want economic and cultural autonomy only.

Many governments in Asia, they regard the concepts of self-determination as a taboo.

In Asia there are many problems involving either national minorities or indigenous peoples.

In Indonesia for instance these are problems involving indigenous peoples in Irian Jaya, in Kalimantan, in Aceh, and many other places including Moluccas.

But these people that I mentioned, they are not claiming to be separated from Indonesia. When they claim self-determination they mean they want more cultural rights, protection of their environment, of their natural resources. They mean less exploitation by Japanese, American, and other multi-nationals that destroy their vital woods, their environment. When they claim self-determination they mean they want to be able to elect their own local council, they mean they want to be able to determin how a particular region where they live should be developed.

In the case of India there is an on going conflict for many many years decades involving Kashmir.

In the case of Sri Lanka, there is a conflict in the Jaffna peninsula between the Simharas majority and the Tamils minority.

Maybe today in Japan everybody knows about Peru.

Maybe not only because the president is the son of Japanese migrants but also because of the situation that took place at the Japanese Embassy in Lima.

But has anyone ask himself or herself why the Tupac Amaru guerrilas went into the Japanese Embassy in a desperate violent action and did what they did.

The problem in Peru maybe is not so different from what happening in Guatemala, what happening in Colombia, in El Salvador, Nicaragua and so on.

It involves the aspirations, the claims of minorities of indigenous peoples for justice.

In Guatemala the civil war lasted 36 years, cost in the lives of 150,000 people.

Finally as I mentioned earlier, the Guatemalan Army and the guerrilas agreed on a cease-fire, a peace agreement negotiated by Norway.

The case of Peru has also to be looked very seriously and not only in a superficial manner, simply condemning the action of the Tupac Amaru movement.

Yes, the action of the Tupac Amaru movement must be condemned. We can not accept the use of violence by anyone particularly against Embassies, against diplomats, businessmen, innocent civilians.

The cause of justice for the indigenous peoples of Peru is not going to be served by the use of violence, taking over an Embassy, keeping hostages, diplomats, businessmen and so on. It will only more and more discredit the struggle of the indigenous peoples in Peru.

But at the same time those in power, those who have the power, have the force, must be sensitive, must be generous, tolerant and ask themselves why the Tupac Amaru movement is doing what they are doing.

Japan, United States and many of the western countries have their own indigenous peoples with indigenous problems.

In the United Nations every year there is a discussion about situation of the Ainu People in Japan.

So the problems of the indigenous people does not affect only countries like Peru, Guatemala, but it also affect the countries like United States and Japan.

Millions of indigenous peoples all over the world for many decades have been calling for a special declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples in the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, for more than 10 years have been lobbying the United Nations for the adoption of the declaration of the right of the indigenous peoples.

The United Nation's Commission on human rights has established a working group to look into a draft declaration.

Maybe if this draft declaration is adopted and becomes law binding all governments around the world in particular those who have indigenous peoples, maybe that will contribute to alleviating the ressentiment, the anger of indigenous peoples like in the

case of Peru.

Human rights education means also that we must educate the societies about the right of indigenous peoples, the right of minorities, the right of foreign workers.

Last but not least I will conclude my remarks with a note of optimism.

My note of optimism comes from the fact that only 10 years ago no one thought possible that the Berlin wall would collapse.

The collapse of the Soviet Union, the liberation of the eastern block countrise, the Baltic States, the freedom, independence of that little country called Armenia are reasons for my optimism.

For many many years we are told, we, the small countries, small peoples, we are told that we have to be realistic.

The bureaucrats in the Foreigh Ministries like in Tokyo, in Washington, in Canberra, in Paris, in London, they are the ones who tell us time and again that we have to be realistic.

They told the people of Baltic States to be realistic.

They told the people of Armenia, of Gruziya to be realistic.

But what being realistic means?

Being realistic for them means that we, the small countries should surrender to the power of the big countries.

Yes, they told the people of Armenia, the people of Baltic States that they should he realistic and accept the irreversibility of the Soviet occupation.

The people of eastern Europe were told also to be realistic because the boundaries imposed by the Yalta agreement were irreversible.

When we talk about freedom, about dignity, they tell us to be realistic.

But the story that I told you earlier on about the Soviet cosmonaut discredit completely the bureaucrats in Tokyo and many other countries that tell us the small people, the people who are persecuted, are opressed should be realistic.

The people of South Korea, of the Philippines have also told the bureaucrats in Tokyo and many other countries' capitals that they will not accept the lessons about being realistic.

And optimistic because it has been the work, the commitment of individuals through

peaceful means that brought down the changes in eastern Europe, that brought down the collapse of the Belrin walls, democracy in South Korea, in the Philippines, in Thailand.

20 years ago, in Latin America basically there was only one democratic country and that was Costa Rica.

Latin America was almost completely ruled by dictatorship.

In the African Continent out of the 51 countries that make up the continent there were maybe only 2 or 3 countries that were democratic.

But even in Africa where there are a lot of problems today there has been a dynamic movement towards democracy.

And that again has been the result not of military force but of the commitment, dedication of individuals, like each of you, each of us that have been struggling for freedom, for peace for democracy.

As I said earlier when I heard the news in October about winning the Nobel Peace Prize, I felt very small, humble next to some of the greatest men and women that humanity has produced in this century.

Let's think of the work, the dedication of people like Nelson Mandela, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Rigoberta Menchu of Guatemala, of Adolf Eskiber of Argentina. Let's think of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, of the Dalai blama, of Mother Theresa, of these great men and women who have given so much of their lives, their vision, their ideas toward peace, to democracy, to human rights.

These people did not have a mighty army behind them.

They have only the power, the might of their ideas, of their vision, of tolerance, of dialogue, of peace.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is a fragile looking woman phisycally.

But she is there courageous, determined, surrounded by tanks, helicopters, by thousands of troops.

For me there is no greater symbol of determination, courage than the image, the picture of that woman fragile looking Daw Aung San Suu Kyi standing there surrounded by thousands of troops by tanks and helicopters threatening her.

And why the army the SLORC is not killing her.

They have killed many many tens of thousands of other Burmese.

They are not killing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi because they are afraid of you.

They are afraid of each Japanese citizen, they are afraid of the millions of citizens around the world who are following the situation in Burma.

That shows the power of individuals of citizens. It shows your power, what you can do to help restoring democracy in Burma, what you can do to restore Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to her right place because she won the elections a few years ago. It shows the power you have to change situation in East Timor, in Indonesia. It shows the power of each of us around the world those who have no armies.

Nelson Mandela was released from prison and today is the president of South Africa.

In September last year I visited South Africa and had the privilege of meeting with president Mandela.

I was very touched because he received me in his private residence, in his own bed room because he was lying in bed sick.

He was recovering from a knee operation so he had to lie down in bed.

And as I talk with president Mandela, look at him, I could not but also think of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Martin Luther King and so many other great men and women of this century.

Talk with Nelson Mandela was like facing history.

Again it was a proof and a demonstration of the power of individuals. Because of the solidarity movement around the world, your help, your work, finally apartheid was abolished in South Africa.

There is one man like Nelson Mandela who is in prison in Jakarta.

His name is Xanana Gusmao.

Xanana is the leader of the resistance of East Timor. He was arrested in November '92, was sentenced to life in prison.

Why was Xanana arrested? He was arrested only because of his ideas of peace, his ideas of freedom, the same ideas that kept Nelson Mandela imprison, that is keeping Daw Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest in Burma.

In November last year I visited Brazil and met with the president of Brazil, Mr. Fernando Enrique Cardozo.

Fernando Enrique Cardozo like many of us also lived in exile because his country

was under a military dictatorship.

Today he is president of a dynamic, fully democratic country.

Again Brazil became democratic because of the solidarity movement, the courageous struggle of Brazilian people, but also because of the dedication, the work of millions of people around the world who denounced the dictatorship in Brazil.

The freedom of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the freedom of Xanana Gusmao is in your hands.

You can help the people of Burma be free, you can help democracy restore in Burma, you can help the liberation of East Timor, the liberation of Xanana if each of you stand up and live up to your responsibilities as individuals and as citizens.

The greatest lesson of human survival, determination was given by Japan, because it resuscitated from the ashes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki rebuilt the country into one of the most powerful economies of the world one of the most dynamic democracies in the world. So if Japan that was destroyed to zero and rebuilt itself into such a dynamic and rich country then it must inspire all of us that we too, East Timorese and Burmese, we can survive and win, and I thank you.

(Original speech in English)

The Significance of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize

— Keynote Address —

by Professor Yoichi Higuchi

Let us all welcome with heartfelt applause Mr. Jose Ramos-Horta, who, as extremely busy as his schedule is, came to Japan yesterday for this meeting in Sendai today. I would also like to thank Mr. Akihisa Matsuno, who has published books about and been for years involved in the East Timor issue, for coming all the way from Osaka to interpret for our meeting tonight, which will be from 7 to 8:30. Miyagi Prefecture Governor Asano and Sendai Mayor Fujii will be taking time from their hectic schedules at this start of the new year to come by and offer their congratulations. On behalf of the committee of conveners of tonight's meeting, I would also like to thank all of you who have come out in such large numbers in this very inclement weather.

As you all are aware, in October of last year, the Nobel Peace Prize Committee announced that it was awarding the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize to Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo and Jose Ramos Horta, our guest tonight. As Mr. Ramos Horta himself has said every chance he has had, the awarding of the prize to Bishop Belo and himself is an expression of the world's respect for the countless people both inside East Timor and abroad who have worked and continue to work for human rights in extremely difficult circumstances, particularly for those who are imprisoned in East Timor or who have given their lives for the cause of East Timor. Although I was given the task today of addressing you with

a message on the significance of the prize, that is something that I think each of us should draw out of the lecture by our guest today. What I would like to speak about before turning over the podium to our guest is rather: "What is being asked of those of us here in Japan."

As you all know, the 1980s and 1990s saw the end of the Cold War -- and the tearing down of the Berlin Wall in 1981 was particulary symbolic of this. The term "Cold War," however, reflects a European and American view of the world, for there were actually hot wars taking place all the time in Asia. There was the civil war in China, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Afghanistan War..., and so I do not believe that the expression, "Cold War," is necessarily an accurate way to refer to this period in modern history. But that aside, with the end of the so-called Cold War, the nightmare for humanity of a head-on collision between the two superpowers has fortunately faded. On the other hand, however, hot wars are breaking out all over the world. Out of this very chaotic state of affairs a key word has emerged, and that word is "human rights." Hearing this word, some of you here today may think: "Human rights? Oh, is that all!" It is true that in Japan at this point, if we are not careful, the word "human rights" may not necessarily have a very poignant meaning. This is not the case, but the impression might be given that it is. But when we look back on a time, only fifty years ago (only fifty years) when, at the most, one could speak only of "subjects' rights," a time when, with the single piece of paper of a draft notice, the authorities could take away to waste in war the lives of its young men, the end of that age and the emergence of the concept of "human rights," whereby each of us is seen having a precious, irreplaceable existence, must have been mind-boggling in its freshness. And it is precisely that which the East Timorese are seeking in the difficult circumstances they now find themselves in.

There are two things that I think are important here. One, the East Timor issue is not a question of how this people is to achieve separation from an existing country and become independent. It is not that. No, it is a question of whether or not the international organization which is the United Nations is going to honor the right of self-determination of this people living in a territory the UN itself considers to be a territory sovereignty

over which is as yet unsettled.

Secondly, ultimately the main thing comes down to guaranteeing in the end a life of freedom for each and every person living there, which is what "human rights" is all about. Why do I say this? While self-determination with the group as the basic value, based on a common nationality, religion, language, etc. has an importance which cannot be denied, it must not end there. You who are gathered here in Sendai will recall the novel, Kirikirijin [The Kirikiris], that was a best seller ten or so years ago by novelist and native son Hisashi Inoue. It is a fictional account of a small village in Tohoku where the villagers become so disgusted with Japan, which though it has a constitution which affirms the importance of "human rights," does not in fact respect them, that they become independent. The important thing was not that the people were related by ties of blood or that they happened to have the same language or the same religion: the crucial point about the Kirikiris' act of self-determination was that it was in order to guarantee themselves a free life, and that is surely what is most important here. Otherwise you have the situation that we see today occurring in the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia where ethnicity becomes an absolute on the basis of which countries divide up, only to produce a situation where minorities within the divisions have to be cut off and then there are still other groups in those groups until you get to endless division, resulting in very horrible things like ethnic cleansing of whole villages. Yes, what we have to reaffirm as the most important issue today is that the bottom line is the human rights of each and every person.

In that context, what dose the issue of East Timor have to say to us who live in Japanese society? Fifty years ago Japan promulgated the Japanese Constitution, a constitution which holds up the concept of "human rights"--by which is meant a life of freedom for each and every precious person--as the supreme value. That was fifty years ago. The preamble of the Constitution speaks of "a universal principle of mankind." This is a principle whose validity extends throughout all of human society. This has two extremely inportant meanings, The first is that Japan itself accepts the concept of "human rights" as something universal. Fifty years ago the thinking that held sway here was that Japan was a unique country, different from the West, ruled by a god-emperor

directly descended from the Sun-Goddess Amaterasu- ohmikami. But now we are a country committed not to uniqueness, but to the principle of our commonality with all of humanity.

The other point, and what concerns us today, is the fact that Japan must do everything in its power, such as it is, to ensure that this principle of "human rights"is enjoyed by literally everyone in the world. But if we are not careful, we might find ourselves doing precisely the opposite. Unfortunately the universal principle of "human rights" has not extended to everyone. In many countries of the world, dictatorial regimes, military regimes throw people they don't like into jail or even execute them. Even developed countries that talk a lot about human rights in many instances close their eyes to the suppression of human rights when these get in the way of their commecial interests. They've got deals to conclude, warships and cannons to sell and they don't want to rub their good customers the wrong way. Unfortunately Japan is no exception. In neighboring China after the Tiananmen Square massacre Japan was the first country to reopen economic ties, and it was also Japan that, after the regime in Burma disregarded the results of the election, gave that regime enormous economic aid. To make it more personal, this is the same as our thinking when, for instance, we know we should speak up about something but don't do so because it might effect our business, or we vote for a candidate whom we know is not working for the public good because we think our business will suffer if we don't. Whether on the level of the individual or the state, it is indeed hard to say "No" when one should say "No" even though it might effect business or it means having to go a bit hungry, but now we are being called on to have the courage to do just that.

Another point that is made and which might seem to be a little less self-serving is that because Japan committed crimes before and during the war in neighboring countries, it is in no position to lecture these countries now on "human rights"or democracy. But isn't the reverse in fact true? It is precisely because Japan does have a debt to pay from its prewar and wartime acts of colonizing and invading its neighbors that I think we have the moral responsibility to speak out when necessary and sometimes say "No" to

human rights abuses and not think only of our monetary gains and losses. This is true not only of Japan, but in the case of the Government of Japan it is we who have voted them into office. It will take time, but we have to work to realize a government that will act as it should. In the meantime, and indeed to bring this about, it is important that each of us think beyond our national boundaries, unlike the state and government that only acts in its immediate interests. This gathering today was possible because of the foundation laid by people in the citizens' movement here in Sendai and elsewhere in Japan who have been plugging away on the East Timor issue over the years. Mr. Michio Takahashi, my younger generation friend who has been the prime mover in bringing about today's program, has long been working for the Sendai East Timor Association by supporting, for instance, the establishment of a school for the children of East Timorese refugees in Australia to teach them the language of East Timor. In the course of these activities a relationship of personal friendship and trust was built up with our speaker today, Mr. Ramos-Horta. And it was because of this foundation that existed that our speaker took the time from an extremely busy schedule of travel around the world on behalf of East Timor after the Nobel Peace Prize announcement to be with us today. And this meeting was further made possible the efforts of the many volunteers who have supported Mr. Takahashi and worked on the preparations. Living in Tokyo as I do, I haven't done anything, I am embarrassed to say, other than deliver this message today. The expression "international contribution" is heard often these days and seems to be interpreted in any way that suits the user. Unfortunately there are many people who use "international contribution" to refer to the overseas dispatch of troops armed with rifles and machine guns. But that is not a true "international contribution." I feel in fact that all of us gathered here today in a solidarity that transcends borders with the people of East Timor and those who support them throughout the world are making a real "international contribution."

I have only been given a certain amount of time, so I will not speak any longer. I see that the Mayor has arrived, and I will turn the podium over to him. My thanks to all of you.

(Original speech in Japanese. Translated by Jean Inglis)

Jose Ramos Horta

Jose Ramos Horta is Special Representative of the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) and Personal Representative of Xanana Gusmao, leader of the Timorese National Resistance.

He was born on 26 December, 1949, in Dili, East Timor, Prior to the Indonesian invasion in 1975, Ramos Horta was the Minister for External Relations and Information, in the first provisional goverment of East Timor. He was the Permanent Representative to the United Nations for the East Timorese independence movement from 1975 onwards for over a decade.

He is a diplomat who has addressed the matter of East Timor to the UN Security Council, the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly, the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation, the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Council on Foreign Relations, the European Parliament, and others.

Ramos Horta is Fellow in International Relations at St Anthony's College, Oxford, and holds a Master in Peace Studies from Antioch University, USA. He is the recipient of the Professor Thorof Rafto Human Rights Prize in 1993, the Gleizman Foundation Award of 1995, and the UNPO Award of 1996. He speaks Tetun as his native tongue, Portuguese (official), French, English, and Spanish.

He is Founder and lecturer at the Diplomacy Training Program, Law Faculty, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.

His previous books include *Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor* (Red Sea Press, Trenton NJ; 1987), and *Timor: Amanha em Dili* (Dom Quixote, 1994).

("Towards a Peaceful Solution in East Timor"
by Jose Ramos Horta, Sep. 1996 published by ETRA P.4.).

Yoichi Higuchi :

Specialist of the Constitution

Professor of Sophia University （Tokyo Japan）

Former Professor of Tokyo University and Tohoku University

Jean Inglis :

A translator residing in Japan and a member of the Kure YWCA East Timor Concerns Group.

Michio Takahashi :

Regular director and chief secretary of Miyagi prefecture's branch of the foundation of teacher's mutual benefit and educational promotion

Secretary of Japanese supporting committee for Darwin East Timorese school

Public speach by Jose Ramos Horta at Hotel Sendai Plaza

Congratulation speach by Shiro Asano the governor of Miyagi prefecture.

Congratulation speach by Hajimu Fujii the mayor of Sendai City